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The Honorable Nancy Johnson
The House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Congresswoman Johnson:

Many years ago, in The New York Times, an advertisement caught my eye. It was headlined, as I recall, "Have you seen this man?" and the accompanying photograph was arresting.

The man was Raoul Wallenberg and, ever since then, I have read whatever I could about him. When I learned that a mini-series would be televised about his work, I insisted that my children watch it with me.

For several years, it has seemed an outrage to me that the governments of his native Sweden and of the United States, with whose agencies Wallenberg was working clandestinely, did nothing to attempt to learn of his whereabouts and to rescue him, if need be, from Soviet imprisonment. To grant him honorary American citizenship some 35 years after his disappearance seems gratuitous without some accompanying efforts to find out what happened to him and to obtain his release if he is, in fact, still alive somewhere in the Soviet Union.

I am writing this letter because of my eleven-year old son. He watched the entire mini-series and was staggered both by the treatment of the Jewish people and the fate of the man who had worked so hard to save thousands of their lives. As he went to bed, he announced that he was going into school the next day to start a petition to the president, asking him to approach the new Soviet leadership to free Wallenberg. His announcement was made in somewhat more emotional and aggressive tones.

I was ashamed that I, who have admired Wallenberg for years, never bothered to write to anyone about him. It seemed to me a futile and unrealistic action. That, too, was my initial but unspoken reaction to my son's idea of a petition to the president. Thinking about it, however, that surely then would have been my reaction had I known Raoul Wallenberg in Sweden and heard him speak of his plan to rescue thousands of Hungarian Jews. And so, I am writing now.

All people who walk in freedom owe it to Raoul Wallenberg to obtain his freedom if he is still alive. To that end, I would be willing to work in any way that I could.

Sincerely,

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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